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Robert J. Miller. *Both Prayed to the Same God: Religion and Faith in the American Civil War.* Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007. xvi + 243 pp. $75.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7391-2055-2; $29.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-7391-2056-9.

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Religion at the Heart of the Civil War

Robert J. Miller has written an impressive overview of a broad and crucial subject: the role of religion in the Civil War Era. Miller has read widely in the field and cogently blends many historians' work into a synthesis of the field.Miller writes from a "popular history" perspective but has managed the rare feat of authoring both an accessible–"popular" in the best way–and very scholarly monograph. The book also could serve as a reference work, as its creative format contains many chapters with their own bibliographies, bullet points, and sidebars with key quotes on their subjects. The theme of the centrality of religion to the events of the era links the chapters together. Despite the attention of many scholars, all of whom Miller generously acknowledges, he contends convincingly that religion is an underdeveloped, and even ignored, area of Civil War studies. The causes of the war, the motivation for combat during the war, and the cultural consequences of the war, such as Lost Cause ideology, all stemmed fundamentally from religion.

Miller describes an antebellum America in which religion penetrated every aspect of the culture. The key evangelical denominations–Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists–constituted both seed beds of regional ideology and also national networks of communication. When issues of the morality of slavery and biblical authority on this issue brought denominational ruptures to each evangelical group, a "deadly breach in national unity" (p. 58) opened that paved the way for secession and Civil War. Alienation on religious issues trained antebellum Americans in sectarianism and alienation on political issues. Miller takes a clear stand that "North and South were two different places religiously before the war" (p. 122). But as the title of his book indicates, they arrived at this divergence from shared religious traditions.

Having established the centrality of belief to American culture, Miller highlights the role of religion during the war. There is much in this section of the book that is original and masterfully researched. The role of chaplains in the war receives special attention, and the section on Catholic chaplains is particularly impressive. Catholic chaplains faced issues unique to Catholic theology and their church's position in American life. Catholic chaplains worked to counter the culture's prevalent anti-Catholicism. Miller documents 2398 individuals who served as chaplains for the Union (p. 99) and 938 for the Confederacy (p. 104). The Union, as in other categories of the war, placed chaplains in a clearer role and a more organized military structure. In his discussions of chaplains and revivals, Miller challenges the biases of the common approach that assumes greater religiosity in Southern ranks. Miller concludes that "Confederate armies were no more or less religious than their Northern counterparts" (p. 161). Wartime conversions were prominent in both armies, and religion played a vital role in maintaining morale and inspiring men to combat. Miller closes his section on faith during the war with a provocative chapter on the morality of the war. The war itself was rife with moral conflicts, ranging from considerations of the just war theory to those of the atrocities of total war. The limitations of the clergy stand out due to their failure to take a critical moral stance on the war and their role as "moral cheerleaders" before and during the conflict (p. 132).

Since the Civil War was driven by religion and fought with religious fervor, it is not surprising that the aftermath of the conflict transformed religion. Miller deftly points out the underappreciated religious consequences of the war. For one, the South created a "Lost Cause" civil religion that further separated the region from the rest of the nation. Also in the South, African-American religion revolutionized itself when freedmen left biracial churches and set up independent institutions. Black churches, in a dramatic break from antebellum white

control, became vehicles for fostering self-determination and community leadership. On the national scale the war brought religious changes so momentous that they have often gone unaddressed by historians reluctant to tackle the "elephant in the living room," as Miller calls religion (p. 1). The war certainly gave rise to a more masculine Protestantism in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Other changes were broader but less easily defined. The Civil War era itself constituted a moral crossroads for the nation, and religion's central role in the implosion of the nation left it after the war with a "significantly lessened national role" (p. 184). The Civil War cannot be separated from religion, and religious histories of the nation must recognize the transformative power of the war. The major roles of the clergy and scripture in antebellum national life find echoes in modern issues of religion and public policy, but the Civil War brought an end to an era in which Christianity held a privileged position in all aspects of national life.

Miller's lively book is essential reading and a ready reference work for all students of the Civil War. Even the innumerable Lincoln scholars will find new insights in Miller's discussion of Lincoln's faith and of how he employed religion to articulate the meaning of the Civil War. The book is rich in edifying and surprising details. It also includes an excellent biographical appendix of the religious affiliations and attitudes of key figures of the Civil War era.

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